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DEPARTMENT PASS TO USAID AND OFDA

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SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA NOTES (June 4-16, 2007)

REF: KAMPALA 964

¶1. (U) Summary: The following Northern Uganda Notes provides information on the situation on the ground and USG activities aimed at meeting Mission's objectives in northern Uganda. These objectives include promoting regional stability through peace and security, good governance, access to social services, economic growth, and humanitarian assistance. Post appreciates feedback from consumers on the utility of this product and any gaps in information that need to be filled. End Summary.

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PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES
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¶2. (U) U.N. Special Envoy Joaquim Chissano presided over the resumption of negotiations between the Government of Uganda and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on May 31. Chissano stated that "time was not in our favor." The LRA demanded the position of vice president of Uganda. The LRA also accused the GOU of unlawfully evicting people from their homes and forcing them into IDP camps, inhuman treatment, cattle theft, use of excessive force, mass killings, and rape. Discussions were heated over the announcement of the assembly routes by the UPDF-SPLA in early May. The GOU and LRA were able to work together and sign a document agreeing to a wider transit corridor and points for crossing the Nile River. All but a few small groups of LRA have crossed the Nile, according to the Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team (CHMT), and were in the vicinity of Rikwangba and Garamba National Park.

¶3. (SBU) Workshops for the parties on various justice options began on June 1. Acholi traditional leader Rwot Acana presented a paper on traditional mechanisms for reconciliation and accountability. Barney Afako, one of the Government of Uganda's legal advisors now serving as a technical advisor to the mediator, drafted a paper outlining the option of pursuing a national legal solution that could satisfy the International Criminal Court's standards.

¶4. (U) On June 13, the parties agreed to guiding principles for the discussion on justice and accountability. Both sides agreed that "a national legal and institutional framework provides a sufficient basis for ensuring accountability and reconciliation in Uganda with respect to crimes and violations committed during the conflict." The parties also agreed to investigate the crimes committed during the conflict and to prosecute the culprits. Penalties would be determined by the gravity of the crimes and the need for reconciliation and rehabilitation of the offenders. The process would also offer special consideration for women and children and provides for alternative justice mechanisms and a truth and reconciliation commission. The GOU will enact legislation to allow

for the implementation of the agreement.

¶15. (SBU) Both parties violated provisions of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA). LRA fighters were collecting food from the assembly area and taking it back to Garamba. The SPLA and UPDF have kept up military pressure on the LRA in Eastern Equatoria. The LRA continues to raise food issues, but donors confirm that there were sufficient foodstuffs and water at Rikwangba. The CHMT was nearing full deployment with the arrival of the two South African observers and one observer from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). One more observer from the DRC would complete the team.

¶16. (U) On June 3, Chissano announced that his mandate was extended through November and that he was opening offices in Kampala and Juba. Chissano stated that the U.N. Secretary General wanted him in the region to see through the implementation of an agreement. An alleged attempt by the LRA to organize a conference to discuss post-conflict reconstruction and accountability is of key concern to Chissano.

¶17. (U) The Acholi Parliamentary Group planned to release an accounting of the atrocities committed in northern Uganda from 1986 to 2006. On June 4, Reagan Okumu, the acting chairperson of the APG, said the compilation of information from local and international organizations indicated that from 1986-1991, the LRA was responsible for 17 percent of the atrocities and the GOU for 83 percent. From 1992-2006, the LRA committed 81 percent and the GOU nineteen percent. Okumu called for all sides to take responsibility for the atrocities committed.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

KAMPALA 00001011 002 OF 003

¶18. (U) The U.N. Inter Agency Standing Committee Working Group in Uganda published return numbers as of May 2007. (Reftel) According to the study, 53 percent of the estimated original displaced camp population in Pader District had moved from the camps to new sites closer to their places of origin. District Chairman Peter Odok W'Oceng called on the Government to increase the numbers of teachers and classrooms to accommodate the movement of the population out of camps to or near their homes. He requested that the Ministry of Education increase the numbers of teachers in Pader district by 1,630 because the teacher-student ratio was now 1 teacher for 91 students and he would like to cut this down to 1 to 45. He also requested 3,066 classrooms to accommodate 161,000 pupils.

¶19. (U) The results of a nutritional and retrospective mortality survey in Lira, Apac, Oyam, Gulu, and Amuru Districts conducted by UNICEF, Action Against Hunger, and the Disaster Management Committees in March/April were released in May. Seventy-nine percent of persons in Lira District moved directly to their home villages. In Apac and Oyam, 64 percent of IDPs moved back to their villages. The survey indicated that access to health, food security, and water and sanitation is much lower in Apac and Oyam than other districts. Returnees in Lira have moved to places far from access to food support and nutritional centers. Although land access had increased, food stocks were still at low levels and NGOs were concerned that this could lead to an important increase in malnutrition rates. Food stocks are also low in Gulu and Amuru.

¶110. (U) Norbert Mao, Gulu District Chairperson, has accused the government of providing IDPs with sterile seeds in their resettlement packages. Mao said that Tarsis Kabwegeyere, Minister of Relief and Disaster Preparedness, should take full responsibility since his organization distributed the defective seeds. "We are not making wild allegations to frustrate government program. We have tested the seeds and found out they just do not germinate...contrary to what Chairman Anthony Atube, Amuru LC5, reported." Mao added that the sorghum seeds were meant for brewing beer and after conducting more tests, results showed the maize seeds were infested with weevils. In response, the Government announced that it was sending a team of technical experts from the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) and the Office of the Prime Minister, to

investigate what was wrong with the seeds. In exchange for the bad seeds, the government delivered packages of millet, sorghum, maize, groundnut, hoes and axes to the IDPs.

¶11. (U) USG Activities: Paul Mpuga (World Bank) and Gerald Owachi (DFID) briefed the Northern Uganda Recovery and Development Group, which the U.S. Mission chairs, on the Northern Uganda Public Expenditure Review on May 24. The public expenditure review sets out the financial challenges in implementing northern Uganda reconstruction and return. The review was conducted from October to December 2006 to enhance understanding of levels and modalities of resources going to northern Uganda, including West Nile and Karamoja. It concluded that in terms of resource flows, the wider north has not been neglected and that funds provided are being utilized by the districts and not returned to the Treasury, as had been alleged. When compared on a per capita level, the total central government transfers to northern Uganda were equal to the national average for other regions. Resources to northern Uganda had increased by an average of 18 percent per year since 2003/4, of which resources from donors and UN agencies had grown fastest. In 2006, the total resources going to northern Uganda were 1 trillion Uganda shillings or 4.3 percent of GDP.

¶12. (U) USAID's program funding for northern Uganda is expected to total \$106.3 million in FY07. This compares with \$87.9 million in FY06 and \$77.9 million in FY05. Importantly, the developmental portion of the budget (excluding emergency food and non-food aid) has grown in nominal terms from \$18.4 million in FY05 to \$29.4 million in FY06 and to \$51.2 million in FY07. Similarly, the portion of USAID's northern Uganda resources that are developmental in nature has grown from 24 percent in FY05 to 33 percent in FY06 to 48% currently.

¶12. (U) Food for Peace has approved a June contribution to WFP/Uganda valued at \$5.6 million, bringing the FY07 total FFP contribution to \$43.1 million. The June contribution was designed to allow WFP to provide three-month resettlement rations to the remaining 73,000 in the Lango sub-region, Lira District, still on general food distributions, and for 130,000 IDPs in Gulu District of the Acholi sub-region. The latter are the first IDPs in the Acholi sub-region deemed ready for the resettlement rations. WFP hopes to be able to award these resettlement rations within the next two to

KAMPALA 00001011 003 OF 003

four months. These three-month resettlement rations mark an informal "milepost of sorts," in that they will signify the end of general relief food distribution in the Lango sub-region, and the beginning of the resettlement ration process in the Acholi sub-region. There are approximately 1,094,000 IDPs in the Acholi sub-region on general relief food rations.

¶13. (U) Twenty partners attended the first Northern Uganda Partners Meeting in Gulu on Friday June 1, hosted by the U.S. Mission's Northern Uganda Advisor. Discussion focused on how USAID can help improve coordination at the district and national levels with USAID programs and with CJTF-HOA. Feedback on how USAID can improve its coordinating role included: play a "policing" role with both UN and NGOs to improve participation and effectiveness of coordination meetings; hold informal gatherings at district level to share information and ideas; hold partner meetings quarterly; provide summary documents on USAID programs and a simple matrix on who is working in the north; provide information on best practices in service delivery; help set direction; and provide written feedback on monitoring and assessment trips.

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IN THE MEDIA AND THE WEB
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¶14. (U) On June 4, Chris Magezi, Uganda Peoples Defense Forces, replied to Olara Otunnu's editorial "Open letter to the LRA." Magezi accused Otunnu of failing to protect northern Uganda children when he was the U.N. Under Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict. Magezi defended the UPDF's role in northern Uganda, "It does not make sense to them that the current peace process and stability in northern Uganda has been due to the courage and hard

work of the army in the face of terror, neither does the rescue of up to 20,000 children by the UPDF from LRA captivity since 2002." Magezi explained that the UPDF could not apply maximum force to the LRA because of the presence of children among the combatants.

CHRITTON